28: Spiro--90 [2]
116, 854, 863, 514, 827

(1947-48) 1949

Woleaians-1-2
Ikalik

"The infant wears swaddling clothes until it has learned to crawl. The wearing of these clothes--a cloth--is a function of desire for cleanliness, rather than modesty, for the moment the infant begins to crawl, the cloth drops off. When an adult holds an infant on his lap, he will usually hold the cloth under it, so that he should not be soiled should the infant choose to defecate or urinate. This precaution is necessary because sphincter control is not taught the child until it can walk and talk, that is, not until he can understand the demand and has mastered the motor behavior to carry it out. The infant's faeces are disposed of in the lagoon, whereas its urine is merely wiped up. Not only is there no attempt made to toilet-train the infant, but the adults do not convey to the infant by means of facial expressions or gestures any exaggerated abhorence for excrement. Adults themselves are ashamed of excretory processes, but do not view excrement as dangerous or harmful, or as material with which to work evil magic. And this attitude, of course, is reflected in their reaction to the excretory behavior of their infants. For example, while I was sitting in a house with a young man and his infant daughter, the daughter defecated on the bare thigh of her father. He gave absolutely no overt indications of disgust or anger, but laughingly called his wife to remove the faeces

from his thigh. The infant, by this time, was having great fun, and with real glee (9) defecated once again, with the same parental consequences."

"9. I appreciate the anthropomorphism involved in this description. And yet, the behavioral constellation was what in an adult one would call, glee--sparkling and laughing eyes, cooing, and exaggerated movement of arms and legs."

28: Spiro--90-91
116, 827, 863, 514

(1947-48) 1949

Woleaians-1-2
Ifalik

"Despite the lack of any exaggerated distaste towards faeces, which the infant may learn from his parents, it soon learns that the adults have peculiar attitudes towards faeces and defecation. For example, many babies play with their faeces, smear them on their hands and face, and sometimes eat them. Again, the parents show their usual restraint in dealing with this behavior, but they do deal with it. They prevent the infant from cultivating this pastime. The infant is not punished, however, because he knows no better. ('Bout baby! He no savvy nothing.') [91]

Once he learns to walk and to talk, however, he is only trained in sphincter control, but he learns that his parents are concerned about his bowel movements. He is taught to defecate in the lagoon, not in the house or on land. If he does not readily learn to use the lagoon he is reprimanded and shamed, though not beaten. Any person, parent and stranger alike, will rebuke a child for polluting the ground or the house. The parents often invoke the authority of the chiefs in chastizing the child. 'Somebody come this place (that is, to our house), very bad this place. (because of the excrement). Chief some, he angry to this place. You no afraid chief?'

My observations indicate that few, if any children rebel against this training, and I observed none who did not observe the practice of repairing to the lagoon, after they had been taught. The attitude towards urine is much more lax. Children who do not as yet wear clothes urinate on the ground with impunity, but not in the house.

But the parents are not only concerned that the children defecate in the right place, they are also concerned that they defecate regularly. Parents often ask their children if they have defecated, and are alarmed by constipation, so that if the child should not defecate for a few days, he is deemed sick, and is given 'medicine', water and herbs, which ostensibly have a cathartic value. Despite the occurance of constipation, however, the parents themselves are confident that children did not deliberately withhold their faeces as a form of obstinacy."

28: Spiro--94 [3] (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 863 Ifalik

"We have already described the tiolet training. The infant is not expected to control his sphincters until he can walk. It is then that his parents train him to retire to the lagoon to defecate, and apparently there is no problem involved in this training, since neither my observations, nor the reports of my informants indicated any."